

# Counteract Balancing Beads Accessibility Policy and Multi-Year Plan

## Message from the President

As the President of Counteract Balancing Beads, I am proud to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to accessibility and inclusion. In compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) of 2005, we are dedicated to ensuring that our services and facilities are accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities.

Our accessibility plan is not just a legal requirement; it is a moral imperative and a core value of our company. We believe that every person has the right to participate fully in all aspects of society, and we are committed to removing barriers that might prevent this.

We have taken several steps to ensure our compliance with AODA, including:

Training our staff on accessibility laws and on how to provide support to people with disabilities.

Creating and maintaining an accessible environment in our offices and facilities.

Developing policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

This is an ongoing journey, and we will continue to seek out and implement best practices in accessibility. I encourage each of you to bring forward any suggestions or concerns you may have about how we can improve.

Together, we can make Counteract Balancing Beads a place where everyone has equal opportunity to succeed and contribute.

Sincerely,

Daniel LeBlanc President, Counteract Balancing Beads

## Introduction to Our Accessibility Plan

Welcome to the Accessibility Plan of Counteract Balancing Beads. This document outlines our strategy and actions to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities and to ensure our compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005.

At Counteract Balancing Beads, we recognize the diverse needs of all our customers and employees. Our commitment to inclusion is reflected in our efforts to create accessible environments for everyone, regardless of ability. This plan demonstrates our ongoing dedication to this cause and serves as a roadmap for the continuous improvement of accessibility in our company.

The plan will detail our policies, practices, and procedures relating to:

Ensuring equal opportunity and access to our services and employment.

Training staff on Ontario's accessibility laws and accessible customer service.

Feedback processes for managing requests and responding to concerns effectively.

Emergency information and public safety that is accessible to all.

We are committed to maintaining an open dialogue with our community and encourage feedback to help us meet and exceed accessibility standards. This plan is not only about meeting legal requirements but also about fostering a culture of respect, dignity, and independence for all individuals.

We invite you to read through our plan and join us in our journey toward a more accessible future.

## Accessibility Policy and Multi-Year Plan

Review Frequency: Every five years

Date Last Reviewed: May 31st, 2024

Date Last Revised: May 31<sup>st</sup> 2024

### 1.0 Statement of Commitment and Guiding Principles

#### Statement of Commitment

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration, and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner.

We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and by meeting our accessibility requirements under Ontario's accessibility laws.

This Accessibility Policy and Plan demonstrates how COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS will:

- Provide training in the requirements of Ontario's accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) as it applies to people with disabilities.

- Provide accessible customer service to people with disabilities
- Make our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities
- Ensure fair and accessible employment practices

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the OHRC respecting non-discrimination.

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS understands that obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the OHRC or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

This Accessibility Policy and Plan is guided by the following principles:

- Dignity – we will provide service in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.
- Independence – a person with a disability can do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.
- Integration – we will provide service in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as others, unless a different way is necessary to enable them to access services or facilities.
- Equal opportunity – we will provide service to a person with a disability in such a way that they have an equal opportunity to access our services and facilities as what is given to others.

The term “facility” in this Accessibility Policy and Plan refers to rooms or spaces at COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS’s offices at 555 Southgate Drive, or other temporary locations used by COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS from time to time.

## **2.0 Training**

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS is committed to training its employees, directors (in their capacities as board and committee members), and officers on the applicable requirements in the AODA, including the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, and the OHRC as it relates to persons with disabilities.

Training of our employees, directors, and officers on accessibility relates to their specific roles and responsibilities. Training includes:

- purpose of the AODA and the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and the OHRC as it relates to people with disabilities
- knowledge and awareness of this Accessibility Policy and Plan
- how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the

assistance of a service animal or a support person

- how to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing services to people with disabilities
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS's services or facility.

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS will train every person as soon as practicable after being hired, elected, or appointed, and COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS will provide training in respect of any changes to this Accessibility Policy and Plan .

In addition, we will ensure that all persons who participate in developing COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS's policies, and all other persons who provide services on behalf of COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS (e.g., external contact centre service providers) receive training about the provision of services to persons with disabilities.

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS will maintain records of the training provided, including the dates on which the training was provided, who attended, and how many people took the training.

### **3.0 Assistive Devices**

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our services, the registry, or our facilities. An assistive device is a piece of equipment a person with a disability uses to help them with daily living (for example, a screen reader, devices that display text from a telephone conversation, a hearing aid, a wheelchair, cane or walker, an oxygen tank). In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other applicable measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our services or facility.

### **4.0 Service Animals**

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS welcomes people with disabilities to keep their service animals with them. A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks. If a staff member cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

If service animals are prohibited by another law, COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS will ensure that an alternative way to access and use COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS's services or facility will be provided.

### **5.0 Support Persons**

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that

person accompany them on our premises.

## **6.0 Notice of Temporary Disruption**

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services, including to the registry, our website, or access to our facility, COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS will notify its registrants and other members of the public promptly through our website, social media channels, and emails to impacted registrants. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of an alternative facility or services, if available.

## **7.0 Information and Communications**

We provide information and communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, our staff will provide information and communications materials about COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS and its services in accessible formats or with communication supports in a timely manner and at no additional cost. This includes publicly available information on COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS's website and Mobile App. Requests can be made by following the steps outlined in section 9.0 (Feedback) of this policy and plan. This Accessibility Policy and Plan is also linked in the footer of the website.

Staff will consult with the person making the request to determine the most suitable method of communication or accessible format that works for them. If COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the organization shall provide the requestor with:

- a) an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
- b) a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

Accessible formats and types of communication supports include but are not limited to:

- HTML and Microsoft Word
- accessible audio formats where possible
- large print
- reading the written information aloud to the person directly
- exchanging hand-written notes (or providing a note taker or communication assistant) or emails
- repeating, clarifying, or restating information

## **8.0 Emergency Procedure**

Publicly available emergency and public safety information will be provided in an accessible format or with appropriate communication support, as soon as practicable, upon request. This

may include:

- evacuation procedures and floor plans
- information about alarms
- information about other incidents that may threaten life, property, operations or the

Environment COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS's emergency evacuation procedure contains provisions for persons in need of assistance.

## **9.0 Feedback Process**

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS welcomes feedback on how we provide services to persons with disabilities and our compliance with accessibility requirements. Feedback will help COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS identify barriers and respond to concerns.

A person can provide feedback in the accessible manner requested to any staff member or by email to [contact@CounteractBalancing.com](mailto:contact@CounteractBalancing.com) . All feedback will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

You can expect to hear back from COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS within 10 business days of receipt of the feedback, in

the format in which the feedback was received. Feedback will be used to improve COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS's services.

## **10.0 Employment**

### **10.1 Recruitment and Assessment**

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS will consult with job applicants who request accommodations to understand the individual's needs so that the accommodations that are provided are effective. When a candidate is selected to participate in an assessment, they will be notified that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used.

### **10.2 Employee Supports**

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS considers the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities. We will notify successful applicants when making an offer of employment that supports are available for those with disabilities, and we provide updated information to employees when there are changes to existing policies relating to accessibility and accommodations.

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS will provide successful applicants and employees with workplace information in an accessible format and/or communication supports if requested. Such information may include COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS's policies, including our policy for accommodating employees with disabilities, and information employees need to perform their jobs (e.g., job descriptions, the human resources manual, department-specific procedures, training materials) and all communication generally available to all employees.

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS will consult with the employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that considers the accessibility needs due to disability. We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- a) information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- b) information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS will consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, during performance management career development/advancement, and redeployment processes.

### 10.3 Workplace Emergency Response Information

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees with disabilities. With the employee's consent, COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS will also provide this information to a designated person if the employee requires assistance during an emergency.

We will provide this information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability, and we will review this information when:

- (a) the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
- (b) the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed; and
- (c) we review our general emergency response policies.

### 10.4 Accommodation Plans and Return to Work Process

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS has a written process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

## **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS strives to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities who work for or obtain services from COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS.

This plan has been created to track our progress and planned actions to fulfil our requirements under the AODA.

1. Develop and maintain an Accessibility Policy and Plan and keep related policies and procedures current. Completed; review of Plan required on or before May 31<sup>st</sup> 2028; Policy will be updated when practices or procedures change.
2. Incorporate accessibility discussions into joint health and safety committee and diversity, equity, and inclusion committee meetings. Target: Q3 2024 and on-going.

3. Continue to provide required training on Ontario's accessibility laws and the OHRC as it applies to people with disabilities.

4. Enhance employee training and access to information by requiring updates every two years on topics related to accessibility. Target: Q3 2024 and on-going.

5. Employment Standards: Continue to ensure fair and accessible employment practices

- Continue to include the availability of accommodations in job postings and throughout the hiring processes.
- Further improve on inclusive employment practices in recruitment. Target: Q3 2024

6. Emergency Procedure

- Communicate COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS's emergency evacuation procedure. Prepared Feb 2024
- To prepare for emergency situations, ensure employees are provided with individualized workplace emergency response information when required. On-going as required.

7. Return to Work

- COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS will prepare a written process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work. This process will outline the steps COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS will take to facilitate the employee's return to work and will use the employee's individual accommodation plan as part of that process. The purpose will be to ensure return-to-work/redeployment accommodations for persons with disabilities address specific individual needs. Target Q3 2024
- Educate employees on the process for requesting individual accommodation plans.

8. Communications:

- Continue to make our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities.
- Ensure any new website content is AODA compliant.
- Update website with new Accessibility Policy and related content. May 2024
- COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS's website and accessible formats will be monitored and tested as additional content or revisions are made.
- COUNTERACT BALANCING BEADS will continue working with its external web developers to maintain an accessible website and to reduce barriers as they are identified.

9. Design of Public Spaces

- We will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces. Public spaces include accessible off-street parking, service-related elements like service counters and waiting areas, and outdoor paths of travel.
- Continue monitoring to ensure office space and meeting rooms meet AODA requirements.



## 10. Procurement

- Monitor, review and update information on accessibility within our procurement process
- Analyze procurements on a case-by-case basis to ensure accessibility requirements are met. On-going

For more information contact

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